

## THE GAY LIFE



## NO. 1—SWEET BABY DAYS

There was not much noise made when the Kid was born; firstly, because she arrived in a tenement, where, as the janitor says, "they don't stand fer no noise."

The Kid's mother, tired from her life of drudgery and childbirth, shuffled off this mortal coil about the time the Kid was three weeks old. So it fell to the lot of "Dopey" Grace to care for the Kid. "Dopey" was so-called by the other children of the tenement because one day, while selling papers, she was knocked down by an auto, which broke her leg and injured her

head. After Dopey got well she would sit for hours staring at the ceiling, forgetting all about the Kid, and the Kid would kick and cry, but to no avail. Sometimes Dopey would "come out of it" long enough to give the Kid a few gills of second-rate milk from the warm bottle which usually stood on the floor, but the formalin which was put in the milk by the kind-hearted milk trust, so it wouldn't spoil, sickened the Kid, and it is safe to say she got the best of the deal when "Dopey" Grace was having one of her "spells."



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## NO. 2—CHILDHOOD'S HAPPY HOURS

When the Kid got a little older she was allowed to flock out on the street with the rest of the kiddies in the neighborhood. Oh, theirs was the gay life, though! It was enough to make a magazine writer, who tells of the discomforts of the overly pampered children of the rich, weep, if he could have seen the unlimited freedom of play allowed the children of the alums. Dead cats, some of them perfectly good as new, were in profusion in the mammoth playground, and wonderful were the things that could be extracted from the entrancing garbage piles that dotted the street, seemingly for the convenience of the poor children.

Of course there were fine sights to be seen in the saloons, too, for the Kid was just high enough to see under the swinging doors without stooping. Sometimes a pretty blue wagon would back up to the saloon and a drunken creature, torn and bleeding, would be hauled out by two policemen and thrown into the wagon. Those were gay times for the Kid. How she laughed when the cops would poke the victim with their clubs to accelerate his movements!

Sometimes it would be the Kid's dad that was pinched for boozing. The Kid didn't laugh then. That meant days without food, and less food when her dad came back.



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## NO. 3—OFF FOR A JOB

One day the Kid followed her old man off to a 'dark place down in a cellar, where he told her to get work. The Kid didn't have any trouble getting a job. It seemed like the smudgy-faced proprietor of the shirt factory only hired little girls. Her brother, who had been out of work for a long time, could have performed as much work as any three girls in the place, but he was a man and it seemed like nobody was wanted but girls—little girls.

After the Kid got her job securely landed her "old

man" went away. It might be well to say here that the Kid's old man was a poor sort of a rummy, who didn't "take no interest in politics" as long as the dinner pail—his very own dinner pail—was full; he didn't care about the rest—his family included. He would meander at night to the corner saloon and drink cheap beer by the bowlful and join in the discussion with some other working "dubs" about the tyranny of the labor unions—how they keep an honest man from getting work, with some other second-hand talk he got from the boss.



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## NO. 4—THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

One day the Kid's old man was bending over a cracked saw in the factory where he worked, and it belted him in the neck—right where he had been getting hit all his life by the boss, the landlord and the politician.

Some of the boys picked up his mangled carcass and by the time the coroner's jury viewed the body the broken saw blade had been replaced by a new one, neatly boxed according to law, and a fine story of how the old man had been intoxicated and committed

suicide by thrusting his head in the saw was doped out.

The Kid would have probably remained at the sweatshop, even if the old man was alive, but it was cinched now. And such long, hot, weary, distracting days they were, too. The poor light made her eyes strain, and the heavy work bent her frail back. But she kept on, on. She never knew anything else but work. And thus she passed from her childhood to womanhood—a drooping flower in a damp cellar.

(To be continued.)



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## NO. 5—SEEKING A POSITION

One day the Kid told the girls in the shirt factory she was going to get out and secure a position that would enable her to see something of life. She had saved her meager wages and bought some "decent" clothes, and in due time appeared before the manager of the department store where the product of her fingers were sold at "bargain" prices.

She was told by the manager when he read her application, which had been written in a large, laborious

"hand" that while she knew nothing of salesmanship he would hire her out of a spirit of benevolence. The wages would be \$3.50 per week. The Kid told him she couldn't live on that sum.

"Haven't you a gentleman friend?" inquired the manager, with a solicitous smile.

The Kid said she never had any gentleman friends but her father and brother, and they were both dead.

(To be continued.)



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## NO. 6—A FATHERLY INTEREST

The manager said he had suddenly taken a fatherly interest in the Kid and told her to make herself at home around the store until closing time. Then they would go out and talk it over.

When they were seated a few hours later in a private dining room in the manager's club, the manager ordered wine. The Kid told him that "booze" (God save the mark!) had been the downfall of her father,

so the manager changed hers to a lemonade. Oh, now we have the gay life, the snowy tablecloth, the bright electric lights, the suave waiters, the ice clinking in the glasses! Here was health and happiness. The manager had taken a fatherly interest in her; no one had ever done that before. She lifts her glass and drinks, and all she remembers is that the lemonade had an odd taste.

(To be continued.)



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## NO. 7—THE FIRST PINCH

After that the Kid did not care much. She met some swell fellows at first and had some gay auto rides and drinking parties. The Kid thought she might as well go the limit now that she had made the start. The "world" would never look at her again except with shame, she thought. Even though her despoiler sat at the head of the leading business institution of the city she was forever doomed. It was ever thus, so it was not for the Kid to bring about a change. The Kid, always pleasingly simple, now decked herself with a string of cheap beads and some other tawdry finery—priceless jewels those, you might say—but the Kid wanted to look as smart as those other ladies who were

clever enough to ride in carriages. The Kid's swell friends didn't last long; they never do. One night just before election the Kid was caught in a raid. The gang that ran the city needed campaign funds, it was explained to her by her pal. So the Kid did not feel hard about it, but rode to the station and joked with the copper who locked her up. After awhile "Mike," the little saloonkeeper, who was "boss of the ward," came around and bailed her and the bunch out. "Mike" overlooked one poor fellow who occupied a cell next to the Kid. He was going up for six months for stealing bread to keep his family from starving.

(To be continued.)



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## NO. 8—A HAS-BEEN

The Kid hung around "Mike's Place" most of the time after that. The gay life wore heavily on her and she began to be a "knocker." The Kid was sore at the world for fair. Sometimes a bunch of live ones—rich men's sons slumming—would drop in, and then the Kid would cheer up while the glasses clinked and the nervous laughter pealed through the wine room.

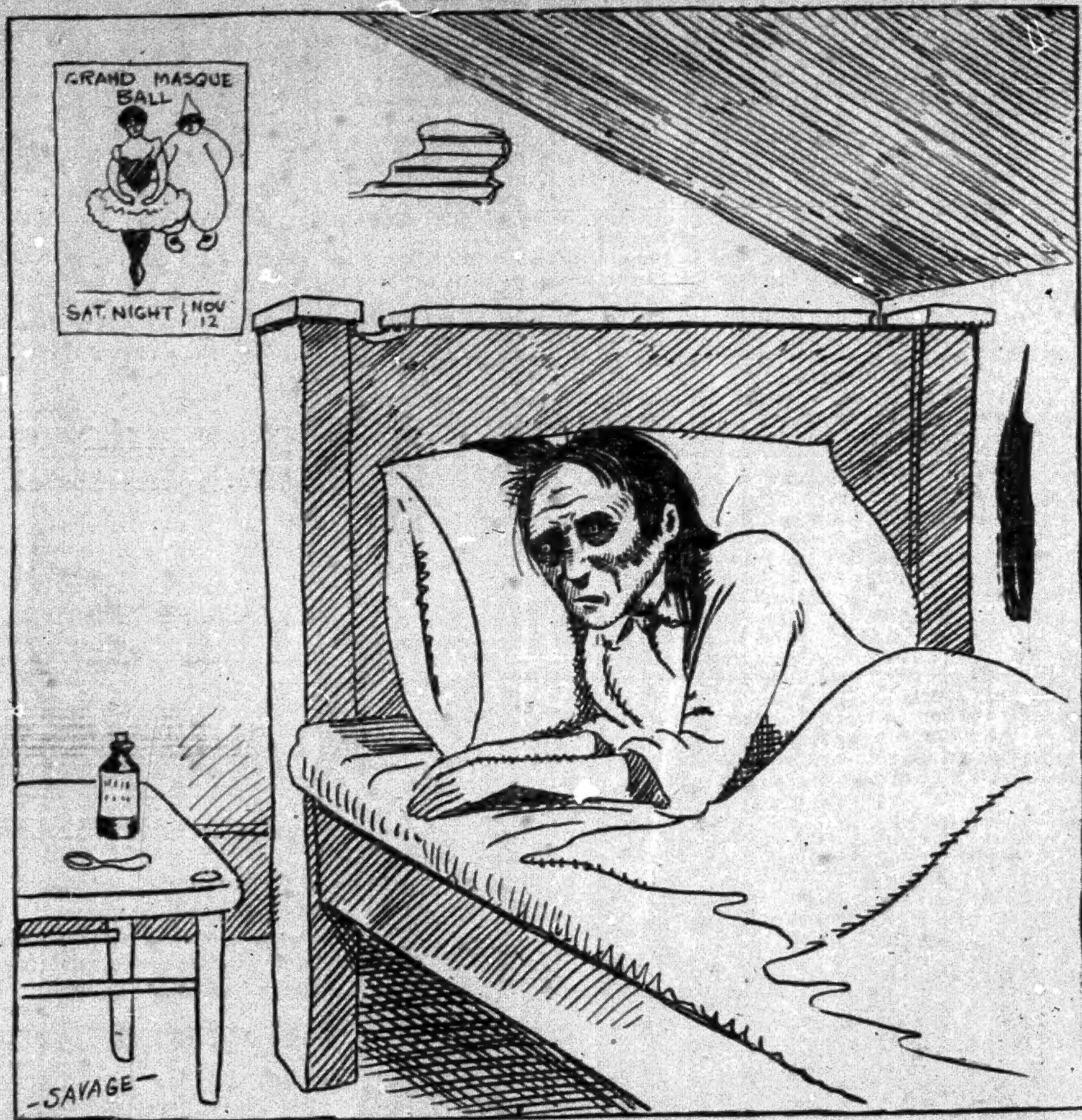
After that the Kid would lose her nerve and sit for hours alone by the table, smoking cigarettes and cursing the world. New faces were appearing at "Mike's" and gradually the Kid found herself backed up to the wall. She was a "has-been."

And then the Kid got sick.

(To be continued.)



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## NO. 9—THE GAY WHITE PLAGUE

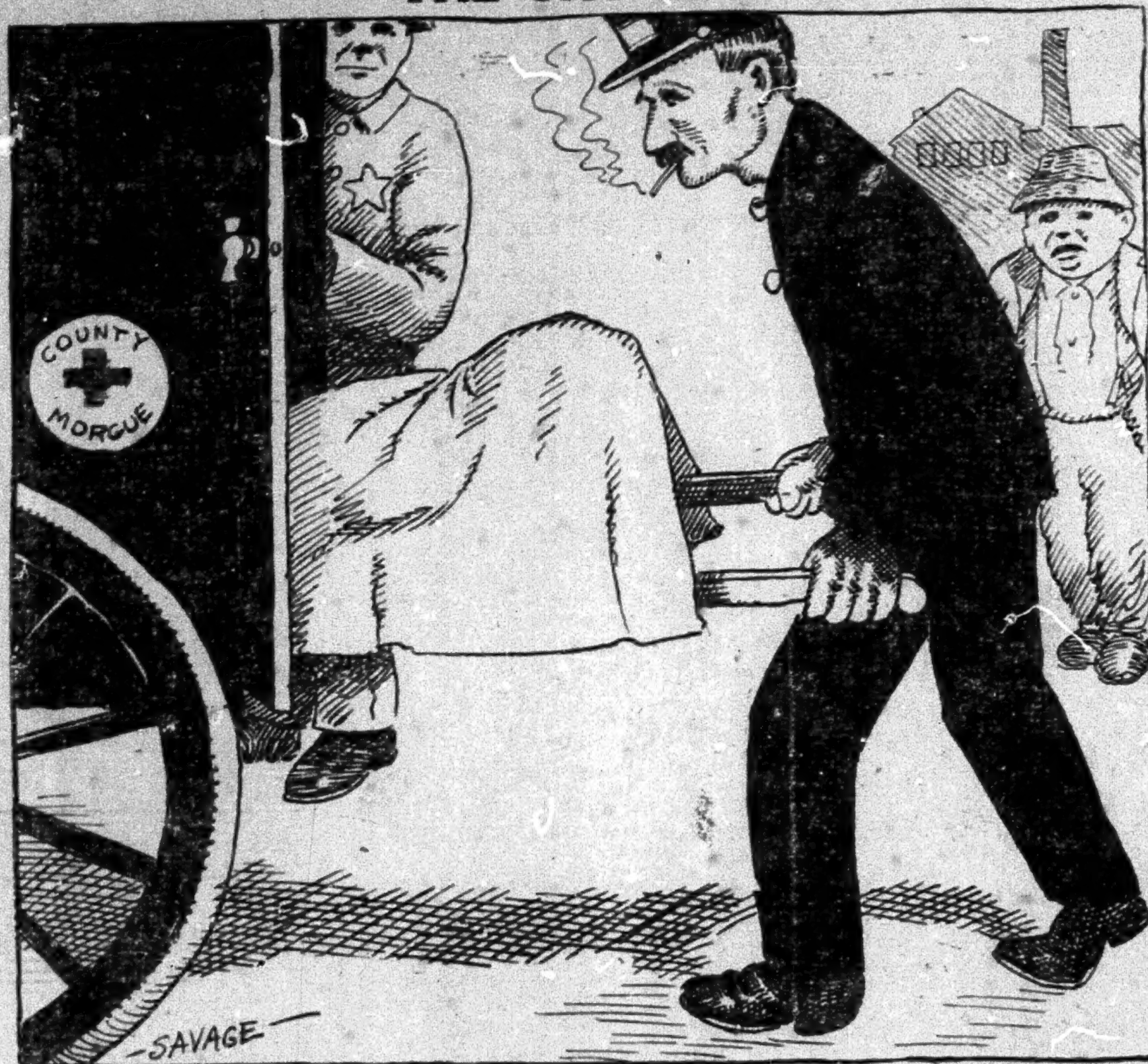
At first the Kid thought it was the cigarettes, so she cut out the "pills," but she got no better. The years spent in the alley and sweatshop were having their effect. The Kid would cough, cough, cough. This annoyed "Mike," for it hurt his business, and he ordered her to remain away from the place. So the Kid got an attic bedroom—a close, hot place it was, too, and began to await the end. No one would be

bothered by her hacking cough up among the rafters and the Kid's eyes sank in and her life ebbed as she tossed and coughed and fought the gay white plague. Sometimes she would get delirious, and bits of song from the gay life would come back to her and she would sing in a shrill, tremulous voice the only songs she ever knew.

(To be continued.)



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### NO. 10—IT'S A GAY LIFE AND A SHORT ONE

It was a hot afternoon and the people of the house were on the fire escapes, "rushing the can" and trying to keep cool, when the Kid cashed in her checks.

No one was there when the Kid gave up the struggle. There was no noise, no fuss. The cop on the beat, when he heard the news, called the dead wagon from the morgue, and as the driver slammed the door

on the last of the Kid, remarked: "It's a gay life, Bill, and a short one."

The Kid was buried in the potter's field with honor, for, as the poet, says:

"Honor and shame from no conditions rise—  
Act well thy part—there all the honor lies."

The Kid had acted her part.

## THE ART OF WAR

BY ELLIS O. JONES.